

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE WINFIELD DUNN ADMINISTRATION  
INTERVIEWS WITH  
MR. STEPHEN A. SHARP

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD  
TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS  
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE  
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MAY 17, 1976

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Sharp

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PLACE

Washington, D.C.

DATE

May 17, 1976

Stephen A. Sharp  
(Interviewee) Stephen A. Sharp

Charles W. Crawford  
(For the Mississippi Valley Archives  
of the John Willard Brister Library  
of Memphis State University)



THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS THE ORAL HISTORY OF THE "WINFIELD DUNN CAMPAIGN AND ADMINISTRATION". THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. STEPHEN A. SHARP. THE PLACE IS WASHINGTON, D.C. THE DATE IS MAY 17, 1976. THIS INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. THE TRANSCRIBER IS BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW #1.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Sharp, I suggest we start with some background information about you and from there we will get into your first association with Winfield Dunn and the development of the campaign.

MR. SHARP: Well, originally I was from Ohio, born in Columbus in 1947. My father established a law practice in a small town, Wooster, where he was active in Republican politics, as was my mother and ultimately myself. I attended high school there and then fled to the South from which my family had come and where I remain.

I went to Virginia and was attending Washington and Lee University. While at Washington and Lee--and even prior to that, in high school, I had been a newspaper reporter and radio reporter --and while at Washington and Lee I became a TV reporter and had done some syndication of some columns and was very generally involved in the journalistic enterprise.

At the same time I was also active in Republican politics. And while at Washington and Lee I was in charge of a precinct organization



campaign in which I came to know Ray Humphreys. Ray Humphreys is one of the great masters of nuts and bolts campaigning. And in the process of doing that I came to know him better. I came to do some work with him at the Republican National Committee. Then when I graduated from Washington and Lee in 1969, I went on to the University of Virginia Law School. I was part way through.

Also in 1969--I should digress--for a month or two I served as press secretary for Lynn Holton while he was searching for a full-time press secretary. I was a part-timer commuting from Washington and Lee to Roanoke where he had his temporary headquarters. When he found his permanent press secretary I went on and graduated and then went into the Army for a short time.

When I entered law school I was somewhat retired from politics, law school being rather time-consuming business.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you enter law school?

MR. SHARP: Fall of '69. Late in May, shortly after the groundswell of riots concerning the Cambodian incursion, just before exams at the law school, I was called by Ray Humphreys and he told me about a man who was running for governor in Tennessee. He said, "Don't laugh--he's a dentist."

And I said, "All right, is he any good?"

And he said, "Yes, he's a good campaigner--a little green, but he knows what he is doing and is pretty much a natural at it."

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember when you received that call?



MR. SHARP: I received that call approximately two days before I decided to go on down there. I arrived on the 23rd. So it was probably somewhere around the 16th of May.

I scurried about having made the decision. I had a very boring summer job lined up. This job, even though it was pictured as possible loser, was made attractive by suggesting that I would be paid as much as for the primary which ended in August as I would in the regular job I had for the entire summer. That made it attractive, not to mention the fact that it was a political campaign, and not to mention the fact if he lost, I would get a vacation. As it was, I packed up my belongings and paid up my bills and left Charlottesville and arrived after an all night drive in Memphis at about seven o'clock Sunday evening--I believe it was May 23rd.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had you finished the second session of law school in Virginia?

MR. SHARP: No, I left before the exams. Because of the Cambodian incursion--this is an interesting twist--the university as well as many schools had offered time off to their activist students to go play politics. "Get involved," they said. They were salving the consciences of our more liberal friends. However, I also took the invitation and left.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the arrangement for that? Were you able to--did you have to return for exams?

MR. SHARP: No, the exams were mailed. Virginia had an honor system, or had an honor system at that time, and still does at Washington and Lee. The exams were mailed to me, and I ultimately took them before the deadline that they were to be mailed back. I



took them studying each exam sometime after midnight in the law offices of McCloy, Wellford and Clark.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that Harry Wellford's law firm?

MR. SHARP: Harry wellford's law firm where he had given me an empty office. There was an empty law office in the firm where I could go and hide when I needed to get away from all the noise in headquarters. So I also used that to do what little preparation that I did for my exams. By the grace of God and a few generous professors, I returned after the campaign. But at any rate I arrived at about seven o'clock reading maps and trying to find my way around in Memphis having been there only once to a Razorback game.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you drive to Memphis?

MR. SHARP: I drove to Memphis from Charlottesville. I had my car full of my worldly belongings--my clothes, my shaving gear and a few other minor necessities--but that was it. Everything else I had put in storage.

I found Getwell Road. I was watching the numbers fairly closely and found the headquarters in a shopping center--in an old store front. I walked in the door just about the time that the campaign strategy session was about to begin and there I met around the table, which was not really a table but a couple of pieces of plywood. Probably an upside down ping pong table on top of two saw horses. They were trying to figure out how they were going to run the campaign.



I introduced myself and listened for a while to see how the lay of the land was and how people were doing. Winfield came in and there was another round of introductions. I really don't remember what was said at that meeting, but it became painfully clear that the campaign was not doing well.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   What impression did you get of the quality of planning, and of leadership at that initial meeting?

MR. SHARP:                       Well, I think basically the people were very enthusiastic, and that they had some experience in Shelby County, but that they were lacking in organizational capability--particularly in terms of scheduling--that is evaluating what is important to go to and where, and no capability of understanding of how to gear a media campaign, which is absolutely necessary for a statewide campaign. They basically were geared for the type of campaign that is good for a county.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   That had been about the level of experience of that group when they were starting in West Tennessee.

MR. SHARP:                       That is exactly right. Essentially, with all due respect, I think it was a bit of dilenttantism by some people who were interested in politics but who really had no experience in it.



DR. CRAWFORD: That is normal in a campaign.

MR. SHARP: That is very normal in a campaign although, generally, you have a superstructure of people who have had some more organizational type experience. Now Harry Wellford had been West Tennessee coordinator for Howard Baker and of course, Winfield himself had been county chairman for four years. But even so they had not had a particularly successful group, in terms of political results in the past. A stark example of the contrast: all the state offices they had were two or three state legislative seats. Dan Kuykendall got elected, I suspect, more on his own hustle than on anything else--that and his ability to reapportion his district in spite of a Democratic administration. But at any rate I did not see what I considered a viable organization. It was foundering, they were discussing details when they hadn't formed a strategy. Winfield had a strategy; he knew what had to be done; he had it all worked out in his own mind--and that was that he had to balance east and west. He looked at it and said, "We've got to deliver Shelby County." That's what these people were basically good at.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he intended to handle East Tennessee, the traditional Republican districts then?

MR. SHARP: Basically, I think that is how he planned to do it. The difficulty then was in the logistics of getting him there and seeing that he saw the right people, and transportation and all these other things.



Now one of the problems and one of the first things that had to be done was to divorce him entirely from the running of the campaign. He and Harry had been involved in making the day to day decisions, although Harry did not have time--he was working primarily in his law office. He had a thriving law practice. He was very busy and didn't have time to devote full-time to the campaign or full-time to his law practice. I suspect both suffered. I only saw one half of that.

Winfield, of course, was supposed to be out making speeches and he wasn't supposed to be spending time wondering why the letterheads weren't there and who was supposed to meet whom at what time, and what time the plane was supposed to meet him. He was supposed to get a copy of it and just make sure he was there when he was supposed to be there.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Who was really minding the store at this time?

MR. SHARP:                   Well, there were several people: There was  
                                  Rufus Powell who was acting as driver and sort  
of on-the-road aide. There was Carolyn Weins who was just doing everything--primarily scheduling. She was doing a good job of scheduling under the circumstances, but without a whole lot of direction. There was a fellow--I think his name was Smith, but I can't be sure--this was Dan Kuykendall's insurance partner--who was, well, he had a lack of experience and was unable, I think, probably to really give it because he was supposed to be essentially directing it day to day but he really lacked the depth of experience to do it.



DR. CRAWFORD:                   It seems to me that this initial meeting must have presented a certain problem for you since you had experience in media management and organization and the practical working of a campaign. You saw that it was not being done, but you were both young and a newcomer. How did you solve this problem of communicating the need?

MR. SHARP:                   Well, it was never entirely solved, particularly the fact that I was young. Initially, I had the advantage of being billed when they knew I was coming and knew that I was to be expected and I was billed as the "Washington expert". Everybody loves a Washington expert! That took the edge off that in some respects, although ultimately when you got down to doing the business at hand, there is always someone with a little tender feeling, particularly someone who is on in years and in his fifties and doesn't like taking orders from somebody in his twenties. That inevitably arose--there were conflicts from time to time, most of which were taken care of fairly easily.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Can we drop back?

MR. SHARP:                   Sure.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Where was Ray Humphreys at this time?

MR. SHARP:                   Ray--that was a continual mystery--Ray had a number of campaigns that year. He was merely a consultant and not a direct manager. So he was shuffling in his car



or by plane or some other method from campaign to campaign. He would pop in from time to time and he would check in. He would call us or we would call him, but it was not ever clear where he was unless he was there.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   When had you first met him and what was his position at the time?

MR. SHARP:                    When I first met him, he was director of education and training at Republican National Committee. In that capacity he came to Lexington, Virginia to organize the precinct work, trying to get young Republicans to handle precinct work--the pilot project for use of young Republicans. This was 1966 when two Republican candidates--unknown then and unknown today--were trying to take on Bill Strong and Harry Byrd and Harry Byrd Jr., his father just having died shortly before.

They had a problem and that there was no local Republican organization. And they said, "Well, can we work the young Republican into doing it." They designed the program by which we would have quotas and target precincts, so many people doing this and so many people doing that. The county of Rockbridge--Virginia is a rather strange jurisdiction in which counties and cities are independent of each other. So that the city of Lexington, which is a few square miles wholly surrounded by the county of Rockbridge, is independent of the county of Rockbridge as is the city of Buena Vista. So instead of having one jurisdiction in a county, you have three. So they divided us into three teams and I had the city of Lexington and another fellow had Rockbridge County and the other one had the city of Buena Vista.



Ray and his assistant, Ern Reynolds, came down from time to time to give us a few pep talks and some guidance but basically we were turned loose. I had done a lot of precinct work before that. Only this time it was not whether it was a matter of precinct but it was a matter of delivering an entire town. Then with a little help from my friends, we had not a great number of people who did a good deal of work. I know one of them put in 40 hours a week on the campaign and still made the Dean's List. (Something that I never forgave him for!)

DR. CRAWFORD: Now let's go back a little bit further. When did you first get involved in political activities?

MR. SHARP: Well, probably about the age of six or seven. My father was a candidate and I accompanied him on door-knocking tours. I stuffed innumerable envelopes until my tongue dropped off from licking those things. He ran for a number of offices. Was never defeated. He is still recently elected to another term. He is now a state judge. I accompanied him on campaigns and got into it early by becoming a precinct captain. I did a great deal of work organizing a teen-age Republican club. It was a very politically active town and a politically active time.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you study at Washington and Lee?

MR. SHARP: I studied several things. I had a double major in political science and business and public administration with qualifiable minors, although they don't grant them in economics and history. So I was pretty much centered in social



studies. I took particular interest in political nuts and bolts, management type things because that was what I was into and knew most about. At the same time I was working as a commercial broadcaster. So from time to time I was intrigued by taking journalism courses, but I stayed out because of certain requirements. I would have to have taken some beginning courses where I had long since done those things through experience.

So I located myself primarily in the commerce school which includes political science and business administration.

DR. CRAWFORD:                    Were you thinking about a political career at the time?

MR. SHARP:                        I think probably in those days, yes. That seemed like the right thing to do. I would say today, no. I am retired.

DR. CRAWFORD:                    From politics?

MR. SHARP:                        From politics.

DR. CRAWFORD:                    Back to Memphis then. Ray Humphreys was serving as a consultant but was not present on a regular basis. So that left who really in charge of things?

MR. SHARP:                        That was the problem. There was no one really in charge of things. Openly, I found it necessary--I tried to be as subtle as possible, but it wasn't always easy--to make sure that things got done. I was brought in basically as the communications director, but ultimately the operational aspect of the whole thing devolved on me because there was no one there to be there on a full-time basis except for Carolyn and Dan's partner and some of the



local people who were working only on local areas. For instance, Jim Gates was particularly interested in Memphis and Shelby County, which was his sole responsibility, and that is all     did. They said Harry was very busy and Jim McGhee was trying to find out where the money was coming from and that was enough of a headache and he didn't need anything more.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   What about office and communications facilities, what did you find there at the time?

MR. SHARP:                   Well, the communication facilities were somewhat grim. There was one Wats ling for which I was exceedingly thankful and a couple of other telephone lines all of which almost were always busy. The operation ran, as best put, on a shoe string. I think the total expenditure for the primary was \$89,000--and that included media--and that is an unheard of expense. I have said many times that I thought that you couldn't even run a congressional campaign for less than a hundred (thousand). I went to Memphis and ended up with less than \$89,000.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   And winning!

MR. SHARP:                   And winning!

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Did the communications situation improve as you went along? Did you have better telephone facilities?

MR. SHARP:                   Well, not so much in that direction. I think what happened was this. First of all, our initial problem was to convince the electorate that we were creditable.



Winfield Dunn was really a candidate for governor, not just another "Hubert Paddy" who pulled teeth, but that he was really someone who could handle the office and could handle John J. Hooker who most everyone realized was going to be winner of the Democratic primary.

We were running against two realists, each in his own field. Bill Jenkins was a realist and had strong support in the First District, which is a Republican stronghold. He felt certain that he would run well enough in East Tennessee to balance out any West Tennessee vote. Now if he had relied on past history, he probably would have been right. But he was running this time against a Memphian and I think that made, obviously, a tremendous difference. He already had an organization that was responsive to him and people knew who he was. I think Memphis was kind of hungry to have a governor. They also knew that Bob Taylor was not going to be governor. And we helped them know that and I'll tell you about that in a little bit.

Any rate, in terms of trying to gain credibility, my first task was to get to know--I had somebody go out and get me a press list. I had no names of anybody in the state. I knew nobody! First task, I got a couple of people--students--to come in and sit down at the Wats Line in shifts. You were trying to utilize the Wats Line at all hours so that it was one of these you pay the money and it is your line and use it as much as you can.

So what I tried to do was have them call every radio and television



station in the state and I got a copy of Editor and Publisher and got a copy of Broadcasting Yearbook. These are basic tool resources. It gives the telephone number, the station and the basic coverage area. Then you call a station and you get the names of all the news personnel and the news director and you ask those news personnel the number of their unlisted telephone number. Most major radio stations have an unlisted news number which (you) can call direct and it goes right into a tape recorder and they use it for their own correspondents to call straight in. Well, we got those numbers and got the numbers of the main political writers around the state and that became my job to get in contact with these people and convince them we had a real campaign.

Now, the part of the process of that was an old piece of propaganda that I drafted. I deliberately used a few trade secrets. Well, they are not really secrets. Anybody who had done political organization uses this in one sense or another. You put a fancy name on it and send it down from Washington and everybody thinks it is a big deal.

Well, we had a quota system and we said we took a vote history of each county--and in fact each precinct in each county-- and broke it down as to who had how many votes in how many elections and did a complete history on it. This was all done by Humphreys.

The book comes down and you look at the book and then Humphreys with his calculator figures so many candidates and here's how it ran in the primaries before and this is what you need to win. See, you pick a quota out of each precinct and then that gives you a quota for each county. You



put all those together and that gives you a quota for a congressional district. Put those together and you get a quota for a state. The quota is just enough to edge through--51%.

Now, that concept had not really been handled directly. What I did was, I outlined it in a letter which I mailed to several political writers. I mailed it to Danforth Thomas; I wrote Ellis Binkley and several others, particularly in East Tennessee, where I wanted the coverage to be picking up. The idea was to convince East Tennessee that West Tennessee was solid. The idea was to convince West Tennessee that they had to stay solid and really produce because we were picking up just enough votes in East Tennessee to do the job. That is ultimately how it happened.

The letter that I sent to Ellis Binkley--this is kind of strange--I didn't put an embargo on it or anything like that and I never expected that they would print it. But Ellis took the letter and took the "Dear Bink" off it and the "Sincerely yours" off it and basically ran a column using the letter which explained. And we are targeted. We explained that we expect to do well in these counties. We'll meet our quota in this county and this county. Well, that wasn't saying we were going to carry the counties. I said we are going to meet our quotas in the counties. Everybody said, "Hmmm. What does this mean?" So they all got up tight about that and I think what it did was to start people to thinking.

In East Tennessee there is a strange phenomenon in that people in East Tennessee tend to vote for whose going to win and not for who they



like. Bill Jenkins may have been their boy, but they suddenly figured that Winfield might win. And enough of them starting thinking that, that we got some votes. We also did fairly well in Knoxville.

During that time I also was in the process of getting to know Ward Archer who was handling the advertising for the primary. And I was trying to put together an advertising campaign. They had already done one advertising campaign and it was awful. It yielded no success basically because it was improperly designed for the type of product they were marketing. Ward had no experience in political advertising prior to this.

So I sat down with Archer's agency and his various people both in terms of creative work and designing the spots I wanted and picking the voices and doing that kind of thing and in terms of the buying.

I had to take an overlap instead of just buying markets. You had to take an overlap and pick the market with the best station with the largest listenership and the type of voter you wanted in a particular market where you had Republican voters that you thought you could win. And not much in Memphis, but mostly up in East Tennessee and mostly on radio except for Knoxville television, some in Johnson City and a little bit in Chattanooga. Basically, I would say the better part of our buys were package deals in Knoxville, because that was the best buy. Those stations hit the most Republicans for your dollar that you could find.

Memphis in terms of dollar outlay had such a large price compared to the number of people, because they were shooting their signal into Jackson, down into Mississippi, and clear over into Arkansas and way up toward



Dyersburg and it simply wasn't enough people, concentrated Republicans, to warrant spending that kind of money. Memphis was basically oriented to billboards and some radio plus plenty of free exposure. He was a hometown boy and the stations gave him a great deal of publicity. It was very handy.

Anyway we were trying to build the credibility up. I remember one night--this is where we get into our skeletons--one night there was a lawn party at someone's house and a woman who worked in the campaign came up to me and said, "Someone left this for you." I opened it up and there it was--a xeroxed copy of a poll--commissioned by Bob Taylor. Bob had decided he wanted to spend five or six grand for this poll, which is pretty cheap for a poll if you want a decent one. And he wanted to go cheap, so the poll was not quite as good as the people who did it would have done it if they had the money to do it. At any rate, the poll was clear enough to me; it showed that Winfield was much stronger than anyone had suspected. It showed that Bob Taylor was much poorer than anyone suspected. It gave us a very interesting insight as to what the issues might be and how we should fashion our speeches. I took the top three issues of the gratis poll and decided to use it. Well, what happened ultimately, I ran into Dana Ford Thomas of the Knoxville News Sentinel. Dana really never liked Bob Taylor very much and he kind of liked Winfield, but he wasn't really sure. I said, "Nobody there believes that we are doing very well." I said, "Now, let me show you something." I showed him two pages of the



poll. I didn't show him the whole poll. I didn't want him to know about the issues; I just wanted him to know about the relative standing.

I showed him two pages, one that showed Dunn (with) 69% of the people liking Dunn because he was honest and clean. The other page was the relative standings that showed him running much better than anyone suspected, equal with Bill Jenkins. By what it showed was a tremendously large undecided vote.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this a state-wide poll?

MR. SHARP: This was a state-wide poll. What happens when you have an undecided voter? Most generally you will find that the vote will break down roughly equivalent to the percentage that are already there. So if one candidate had 45% of the vote, he will get 45% of the undecideds. This doesn't necessarily come true, as it did in this case because they were really undecided.

What ended up was that Dana Ford used the information that I gave him in the poll on a page one, Sunday, upper left-hand corner of the Knoxville News Sentinel story which is the best exposure that one can possibly hope for from a newspaper for Republicans. It is the only Sunday paper that goes both north and south from Knoxville, hits all of Knoxville and goes all over East Tennessee and horse race country, mind you. Here was a poll showing that Winfield Dunn was coming up and was really the hard charger. That's how it was captioned.

As a result of that, Dana Ford decided he had better find out a little more about Winfield Dunn and see how he liked him. So I gave Winfield some



prepping and I booked Dana Ford into the car because the only way you are going to get exposure is to get somebody in there talking to him. Even if he make a few mistakes it won't be too bad, and besides Winfield is a charmer and Dana Ford can be charmed.

Dana Ford is a pretty cynical guy, but he likes people who are open and honest. They are so refreshing. So there were a few people who were upset about that because I had to give Dana Ford an answer before I consulted with Rufus or with Harry Wellford. I said, "Yes. And I'll arrange it." Then I had to convince Harry that it would be all right to have this press member riding in the car. If you want to win this campaign, you'll have him ride in the car. Then he rode in the car.

So he went up and took a tour of West Tennessee which is a bad place to go normally.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Why? For a Republican?

MR. SHARP:                   For a Republican! My telephoning--this was  
also what I was doing all around the state.

Always I would spend, oh, 12 hours a day on the telephone calling people in every county I could get a hold of--newspaper people, radio people--what do you hear? what do you know--people in our organization, what do you hear and what do you know? what have you got to show and what's going on? Give me something concrete. Information is the key to any campaign. This is the same reason the Republicans in 1972 bugged the Democratic headquarters. That's an extreme way of getting it, but the point



is you have to have intelligence. You have to have hard intelligence. You have to know what is going on.

One of the best sources is not in your organization but newspaper types. You give them information and they give you information. It is a two-way street and it works out very well. As long as you keep feeding them stuff and it is good they'll keep passing it back to you, which is basically where I got most of my information and where I started pushing in terms of strategy. Where I would get some information, I'd say, "Well, you better try it this way because you have strength here and strength there." And that is also how I came to know that Brock was basically supporting Maxey Jarman with organization, and almost entirely in the Third District, money, people and everything. We realized that, for being neutral, he was not very neutral!

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Then did you find anything about support in the First Congressional District?

MR. SHARP:                   We always knew that was dangerous. There was no way we could get organizational support in the First District. Jimmy Quillen had decreed that it was going to be his boy Bill Jenkins and no one in the First District would dare do anything else! Quillen's methods are not always the prettiest, but they are pretty effective! It is based a great deal on subtle or not too subtle intimidation. You either toed the mark or you didn't get any patronage. It was a pretty tight ship.



There were a few people over there willing, people who were on the outs basically--that's where you find them. You find the disaffected people who are not getting a piece of the action and bring them in and they will do the job for you. We were able to do that in the First District and we were able to corral a few votes, just enough, to add to the total. We never expected to do too well in the First, although we did quite well. We did better than we expected, but we did better in the Second.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you think you did better in the Second?

MR. SHARP: Well, because Jenkins didn't have a strangle-hold first of all. We could get bigger people. Claude Robertson was not a strong candidate. They certainly didn't want Maxey Jarman. Winfield got in fairly quick and picked up a few people that could be considered reasonably substantial, I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did they not want Maxey Jarman in the Second?

MR. SHARP: I really don't know. It was just that Jarman didn't seem to catch on there. Jarman caught on in the Third primarily because of Brock's sub rosa support. Jarman caught on wherever he did in addition to that because he mounted a tremendous campaign. He spent more than a quarter million dollars and closer to a third of a million dollars trying to get elected--compared to \$89,000. It was a bad investment. But he had the money to burn, so he didn't care!

Jenkins spent, oh, about \$100,000 and Robertson spent about \$100,000. That's the rough breakdown.



DR. CRAWFORD:                   What about logistics--transportation getting the candidate around in time?

MR. SHARP:                   Getting the candidate was primarily a driving problem. Rufus Powell handled all the driving and was the man Friday, and was the man with the cards, and the man with the schedule, the man with the tape recorder. That was another thing--Rufus didn't like it much--but I insisted that Rufus tape whatever he could because of two things: first of all, if you are running a big size campaign--this was the idea that we really never achieved--you tape everything the candidate says. If somebody says he said something else and you can play the tape back and say, "Oh no, he didn't." And if somebody said he said something and he thinks he didn't, you play the tape back and say, "Oh yes, you did!" Don't say anything about it. Don't go out on a limb and deny it. 'Cause if we have it on tape then they have it on tape. It's a basic protection.

At any rate, that was one thing. The other method of travel was by air. That was primarily due to the large airplane of F.A. Maddox, better known as "Judge". The Judge is a rather salty character, very interesting, and let's say well successful, who enjoyed his work, but enjoyed his play even better. One of the things he liked to do was pilot. He took the Beech Travel Aire and flew that thing all over the state. He took Winfield wherever he wanted to go. A couple of times we used other planes.



DR. CRAWFORD: Why did he get involved to this extent?

MR. SHARP: I don't know, but he was there when I got there. For whatever reasons he was involved, he was involved with Winfield. There was--let me think now--another fellow--another finance man besides McGhee who was a real high pressure man--a man Carolyn Weins had worked for originally. He had a funeral business and an insurance company out past White Station. I can't think of what his name was.

DR. CRAWFORD: We can check that.

MR. SHARP: Basically, these people knew each other through country club connections and other things. I don't know if Judge Maddox was a real Republican or not. You see Maddox's uncle . . . there's more than a small amount of self-interest here from both ends. Maddox's uncle was head of Associates Capital Corporation. They always have a lot of business before the banking committee and other legislation. I suspect they were quite interested in seeing who was going to be involved. I don't know what the Judge's relationship to the extent of trading information is. I'm sure there was a bit of self-interest in the Maddox family there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did your transportation situation improve as the campaign went on?

MR. SHARP: The primary was not one for money. It was one of those things that we scraped along just barely making enough money to buy this and then to buy that and



hoping to pay the bills. The money was tight all through the primary campaign because everyone was waiting to see who was going to win. They didn't want to spread their dollars too thinly. What they wanted to do was, to take the dollars that they had and single shot them after the primary was over. Of course, there is risk there. The people who get in first get first crack at the candidate. Those people who gave their thousand dollars early--mostly from Memphis, a few from Knoxville--I remember there was a contractor, E.C. Bevins from Knoxville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, he was the manager of Knox County.

MR. SHARP: He was there way back in the primary and he was there right at the beginning, and he had money up front and I am sure he had plenty of access when the time came.

DR. CRAWFORD: He is now a member of the Board of Trustees of University of Tennessee, I believe.

MR. SHARP: It doesn't surprise me. But those people who came in early with a thousand got the equivalent of what would have cost them ten later in terms of recognition and gratitude--which is always typical in a political campaign--particularly in Tennessee.

One of the things that I did when I got there, I borrowed Winfield's library card. I went over to the public library and I took out about four or five books on Tennessee history which I immediately went through, memorized to the best of my ability. Of course, I have forgotten it all now. I learned enough that I could converse with people from various counties in a manner which they felt that I really knew something about their county. It made them feel at home, made them work a little more easily



with me and it was the kind of thing, if you are an outsider coming into a state, you can't be an outsider very long. You have to draw connections before long.

You talk to people who have gone to this school. I remember I went to Greeneville and the Greeneville Sun is owned by John Jones. The Jones family is a Washington and Lee family. They have been sending kids there for probably a hundred years. I had gone to Washington and Lee and I had known some of them and I dealt with some of the people in the journalism school. So again it was alumni type action available to me, because there are a lot of Tennessee people, particularly from Memphis, who had gone to Washington and Lee. Harry Wellford had gone to Washington and Lee. Winfield's son was currently attending Washington and Lee. Of course, Brock had gone to Washington and Lee and a number of other people involved in state politics. So that gave me some entry. Newswork--just plain knowledge--is fairly useful in that regard.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   How much did you travel?

MR. SHARP:                    I traveled very little. I traveled one flight to Memphis and from Memphis to Nashville for a press conference in Nashville--a small meeting. I was particularly anxious to go to the press conference to see how he performed. I had to see him in person and to see how he handled himself. He did reasonably well and I was fairly pleased. I think I still have a transcript of that or at least a good account of it. Maybe it is on one of these tapes here.

At any rate, it is on one of these tapes here and it was a pretty good press conference and I was happy about it. So I rarely did much traveling. I went to Knoxville once. I think he and I and Maddox flew



over to Knoxville or maybe it was Chattanooga. It was to Chattanooga, but rarely did I go with him. Almost all of my work was done by telephone. I assumed a real plastic ear!

The key is just turning out the paper. You have a terrible logistic problem just getting the press releases out. We finagled some. We took some pictures that weren't very good--a couple of them were out of focus--and then had the people at the advertising agency design a strip--a fake film strip, 35 milimeter--and then I designed a letter head around that with a film strip across and then DUNN FOR GOVERNOR and then NEWS and then I had my--this was press release type form--where it says contact name and phone number and so forth. We tried to get this a month before the primary and of course, just couldn't get it together. It just wasn't available, but you needed a letterhead or something that you could send things down. We hadn't been sending press releases out. When we were sending them out, they were not getting any attention. So we needed an attention getter. This was it. It was red, white, and blue and very stark letterhead. It jumped out at you and was different from anything that anybody had in Tennessee at all. We used that through the primary and we got about 4 or 5 thousand sheets of it. Toof did it for us. When the primary was over and we moved the headquarters to Nashville and they decided--Ralph Griffith became the joint communication director and Lamar Alexander became the campaign director--and they decided that they wanted their own letterhead. I still have about 500 sheets of those



things sitting in my closet.

DR. CRAWFORD: Lamar Alexander came down from Howard Baker's headquarters.

MR. SHARP: Lamar had been a Baker man, but at the time he had just finished working in the White House.

He had been working as an assistant to Bruce Harlow.

DR. CRAWFORD: Just before this time?

MR. SHARP: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where had Ralph Griffith been before that?

MR. SHARP: Ralph Griffith had been Baker's press secretary.

Basically, what happened was, Brock was busy running his own campaign and had basically supported our opponent. This left in terms of building a party staff--a big gap in terms of organization. Baker's people--Baker and Brock get along quite well--but their supporters don't. Baker's supporters immediately saw a vacuum. The nature of politicians is that they abhor a vacuum. So they moved in lock, stock and barrel. In essence, they took over the campaign. Lamar Alexander brought in--instead of having Carolyn doing the scheduling--they brought in some fellow from Knoxville whose name escapes me. They picked a new friend of Lee Smith's to handle driving the car and got rid of Rufus. It was essentially a coup de etat by the Baker people.

DR. CRAWFORD: It's not unusual in a campaign from primary to a general election.

MR. SHARP: No, not at all unusual, but it was quite effec-



tive and done in the best East Tennessee tradition.

The only survivors of that were Carolyn and myself. I think I survived solely by the grace of Winfield. Because they were all after my scalp. Griffith wanted my job. You see the difficulty with this type of campaign--and this is where we get into the transition--is that we won the primary based on my conception of how I thought the campaign should be put together, which dovetailed with Winfield's. But in terms of nuts and bolts, it was the way that I felt it ought to be done. And in terms of issues it was done. The best asset that he had was his openness and the best asset that he had was the fact that he was not a politician and he could say things and it didn't make any difference. He had to play the open game. Once you get votes--this is what happened to McGovern, and it happened to a lot of other people--once you start getting votes then you start wanting to waffle. If you waffle too much, you lose the fervor of those people who were your hardest supporters. It happened to McGovern when he waffled on Eagleton and that was the end of it. From there on he couldn't possibly have won.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   There is an inevitable tendency to play it more conservative when you start gaining ground.

MR. SHARP:                       Oh sure. Absolutely. You need to do that. Because obviously if you are not as desperate, you don't need to get a lot of these things. I think the problem however, was essentially they are very conservative. They play it very East Tennessee,



play it close to you best because there is so much in fighting in that section among Republicans as well as Republicans and Democrats--very fiercely partisan people. They are also by history and by training not disposed to the type of candidacy that Winfield was, at least in theory, a symbol of.

DR. CRAWFORD:                    Perhaps Lamar Alexander's campaign for the same office in '74 is an indication of that.

MR. SHARP:                    I think that may be true. Lamar has not only a devious look about him--but he has and it is unfair--because he just happened to lose his hair prematurely. He has a look that people do not trust. He does not have that depth. You look into his eyes and you are not charmed. You can see the calculation. You know that the guy is smart, but you don't trust him. Whereas Winfield, you would probably open your heart to in a minute. It was just a whole different type of personality in terms of communicating with the voters. It doesn't mean that either one of those two men are any different in terms of ultimate--in terms of their real personality--but it is in how that personality is communicated that voters perceive them. That is an absolute key to winning an election. Now when you start co-opting that, you have a great danger. As it was things worked out so that it made no difference. Although I think the margin would have been bigger had he not done the waffling that they urged upon him. The reason I suspect that--it didn't make any difference--was that John J. Hooker was the opposing nominee. I could have beaten John J. Hooker,



you know, had I moved into the state six months beforehand.

DR. CRAWFORD:                Perhaps he contributed more than any single person except Winfield Dunn to the Dunn victory.

MR. SHARP:                    I think that is a reasonable assumption. He just simply got off to the wrong direction.

But at any rate, there was a time right after the primary when things were quite in flux. There was a lot of bleeding going on because people were being chopped. Jim McGhee who had been the treasurer was suddenly supplanted by Frank Barnett as the chief fund raiser. Now I don't know that Jim cried a lot about it. He stayed on as treasurer and I am sure he was glad to have some time to do his business. But the whole control shifted from Memphis to Nashville in about a week's time. It was fascinating to watch because I had never been involved in any blood letting at that point. I was still the student of political science. If they had cut my head off, I would have taken my vacation and be done with it.

DR. CRAWFORD:                You had the advantage and I guess that was what it was, of being sort of a detached observer.

MR. SHARP:                    Yes. Of course, I was fascinated by how the political animal operates. You watched it at its best and worst depending upon the perspective that you placed on it in this time period because there was tremendous jockeying for position.



Smith came in. The whole Knoxville crew came in and completely eliminated the people from Memphis in that. Normally, you would say that is good because the people from Memphis, as I said earlier, were basically amateurs. In many cases that was true, but I also noticed they also eliminated the people who weren't. And in fact replaced them with their own amateurs. So it was not a matter of upgrading the staff particularly. Now it was in terms of Lamar because Lamar was a good campaign manager. He knew his business. Ralph Griffith has been a hatchet man for the Knoxville Journal. He was a good political writer. But Ralph's problem was that he didn't know radio and television. He knew newspapers like the back of his hand; and even better than his news business he knew the politics of East Tennessee. He knew it better than anyone because he had been there with Howard Baker for that long.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   In a larger strategic sense, this may have made a good deal of logical (sense)--the arrangement though it may have been an obvious power play.

MR. SHARP:                    Oh sure!

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Winfield Dunn already had Memphis support once he had won the primary. With the feeling against Hooker and the fact that he (Winfield) was a native Memphian and was likeable, Memphis was fairly certain for him and the crucial battleground for him really may have been East Tennessee from that point on. The question whether or not that East Tennessee would accept him may have been the really important one for Republicans never get much support in



Middle Tennessee in this state.

MR. SHARP: That's for sure. I think the only difficulty there was the danger of having such a whole-sale takeover. You see Winfield appeared suddenly to have been captured and to be a prisoner in his own campaign, so to speak, because of the fact that everyone who came over were Baker people. Had there been a little Brock-type personnel available--in fact, there was some attempt to find some of those--Ken Roberts did come in with us in the finance area. But in terms of political operatives, it was very thin from the other wing of the party. But in East Tennessee you have basically two groups. You have the Baker group and the Brock group. Baker is the stronger of the two, but not all that much.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why was there a decision made to try to get some Brock people involved? Do you know who made that?

MR. SHARP: Well, I think that was basically Winfield's attempt. Winfield saw what was happening. I don't think he was overwhelmingly pleased by it, but he felt he had no alternative. He felt in order to get what it would appear to be talented people who knew politics and had had prior campaign experience, it was necessary for him to get somebody who was available. All the Brock people were busy helping Brock. He just apparently felt he had no choice but to turn to the Baker people, which was probably true. He really didn't.



The initial result looked like a takeover and that didn't help his image any, although they did bring in the expertise in a lot of areas that I think was sorely needed.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you had observed yourself that the Memphis operation was conducted essentially by a group of amateurs or people who had not operated on state level.

Doubtless that was needed and, of course, Brock was running that year and Baker was not. So it may have been historical development more than anything else. The Baker people were free and the Brock people were not.

MR. SHARP: I think that the takeover would not have been anywhere so great had there been a little more equality involved. The difficulty was that Winfield had to gain control of his own campaign and ultimately his own administration because he lost control of it. After or about the first of September until November he simply lacked control of the campaign. He was simply going through all the motions that a candidate has to go through, but all the decisions were being made by the Baker people.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, in a way you had felt he needed to do that, hadn't you at the beginning?

MR. SHARP: Well, that is necessary for a candidate to do, but you can't step back too far. And his problem was, and I had a suspicion--and I could never put my finger on and he never really said anything--I had a suspicion that he wasn't entirely pleased with everything that was happening. But he was taking my advice, and theirs as well, that you give the speeches and we'll take



care of the nuts and bolts. So as a result he did give the speeches and the nuts and bolts were taken care of.

There's an interesting meeting--I don't know if this has been discussed or not--shortly after the primary. The primary was on a Thursday. On Saturday evening after the primary, we were flown to Knoxville (I think we were in Memphis) and we flew in the Conwood jet (Martin Condon's jet) to Knoxville and were met at the airport and driven to the Knoxville City Club where we sat in the upper room as guests of Howard Baker. And this was a meeting of all the candidates and their top aides in the primary. Maxey Jarman was nursing his wounds and had gone off to Switzerland, but all the rest of the campaigners were there. Well, Hubert Paddy wasn't, but nobody really cared. Claude was there--his people. Jim White was there representing Maxey Jarman. Bill Jenkins was there as well as his manager. And I was there and Winfield and Howard Baker was there and. . .

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Who else was there with Winfield?

MR. SHARP:                   Harry Wellford, I am sure. I'm not sure who else. I don't remember. I would have to look at my notes. I took interesting notes on it. Basically, what was done was to sit down. Baker was the prime mover in this. He's the one that called the meeting. He was the only one that could get all the parties together. It had been a pretty tough primary, and everybody but Maxey obeyed the call and came and sat down and talked.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Jim White was there for him?



MR. SHARP: Jim White was there for him.

DR. CRAWFORD: What happened at that meeting?

MR. SHARP: Basically, what happened was, everybody just sat down around a table, got to know each other, talked about where the campaign was going. And we knew now that John J. Hooker was the nominee. We talked about areas of organizational strength where we could merge our organizations and make strong total organization. There was the inevitable horse-trading in the sense that everybody wanted a piece of the action and somebody had to lose out. For instance, we had county chairman for Dunn who were lightweights politically in their counties.

DR. CRAWFORD: But that was all you could get in the primary?

MR. SHARP: That was all we could get in the primary, but now we are in the general election. You are put between a rock and a hard place. You owe the person loyalty. That person has gone out on the limb for you, but Jimmy Quillen says, "My guy runs the show or there is no show." What do you do!

DR. CRAWFORD: That's an inevitable dilemma, isn't it?

MR. SHARP: It's not an easy one. Ultimately, compromises were worked out. It's pretty hard to work them out with Jimmy. He was not entirely pleased, but . . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you take care of your original supporters in the counties?



MR. SHARP: Well, most times what we do with them is to put them and make them co-chairman with somebody who was a heavyweight or make them chairman of Citizens for Dunn or some sort of an organization--a parallel organization in effect--so that the machine organization could deliver the votes and your people could be relatively happy.

DR. CRAWFORD: Probably as good a solution as you could work out.

MR. SHARP: It is not easy. The First District was the one where we had the trouble. Otherwise, it was not really a big problem.

DR. CRAWFORD: What other kind of horse-trading took place there, other than the taking on of new staff members in counties.

MR. SHARP: Well, I don't know if that decision was made there or later, but we picked up--sounds like we are in a draft for baseball players--we picked for Middle Tennessee a coordinator, a former staff member of Maxey Jarman, Robin Beard who has since gone on to other things. But Robin then became an integral part of our campaign. He spent a lot of time and miles running up and down Middle Tennessee, much of which is his district now. I don't think that is any small coincidence. But at any rate, he got to know the people in those areas. He delivered relatively a sizable vote for Republicans. Anybody who can deliver any votes in the Tennessean's main circulation area is doing quite well.

DR. CRAWFORD: That is not traditionally Republican territory?



MR. SHARP:

No, it is not. That certainly doesn't help to have John's Seigenthaler kibitzing it.







THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS THE "ORAL HISTORY OF WINFIELD DUNN CAMPAIGN AND ADMINISTRATION." THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. STEPHEN A. SHARP. THE PLACE IS WASHINGTON, D. C. THE DATE IS MAY 17, 1976. THIS INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. THE TRANSCRIBER IS BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW # 2.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Sharp, let's get on into matters of transition from the primary to the general campaign and some of the things that you had to deal with there.

MR. SHARP: Well, the primary to the general campaign was kind of like a boa constrictor swallowing a pig whole. We were kind of strange for a while until you get it all digested. You are in a situation where you have absorbed a large number of people and you are trying to meld the organizations together, and it is extremely difficult to put together a large, cohesive organization in a few weeks time. We ran into a lot of problems with our growing pains, as it were. We had our old supporters who were being moved aside and we had new people coming in that we didn't know. Winfield was not necessarily comfortable with all of them. He had to get to know them and get the feel of them.

There was also the question of planning, when do you start the campaign. One of the real problems was that during this jockeying for po-



sition there was a two or three week hiatus(when not)anything(was) being done on the campaign. We had to just sit back and wait because Winfield was unwilling to move until everything was in place. So we lost some valuable time. In fact, what happened was it cost us in terms of offense right off the bat. While we were fiddling around, Rome was burning.

John J. Hooker and his people were planning the campaign. They had gone back and done all the research, and the Tennessean was a great research tool. The Tennessean reporters had put together a very nice book. They went back and did research and found a few issues that they would embarrass Winfield on.

First, and foremost came the income tax. Shortly after, John J. Hooker roared out of a Labor Day Democratic week-end and he started blasting Winfield for supporting the state income tax. The problem, of course, was that the Constitution forbade a state income tax. There was no way that the Constitution could be amended to allow a state income tax before Winfield Dunn's term was up, had he been elected. But not even withstanding that, he hadn't really said it. But that didn't mean anything. Politics is made of perception, and they got the first shot in in the perception angle.

They started enough people worrying about the income tax that Winfield felt obliged to respond. That put him on the defensive. He remained on the defensive for several weeks until he started--well, I think what really happened was, he started swinging a little harder on Hooker's business--and Hooker's businesses finally took the total collapse.



And also, what the real key was, we were able to capitalize on the bitter Democratic primary. Supporters, particularly in the Nashville area in Middle Tennessee of Stan Snodgrass, were very nervous about coming over and helping Republicans. (This is) something they very rarely did, if ever! Republicans were not their cup of tea, or glass of Jack Daniels, depending on how you look at it. And they simply didn't like Republicans and didn't want to help them. They hated John J. Hooker.

When in doubt, one always goes in the direction of hate rather than of fear. So they hated Hooker enough to help us. They did! They delivered a great number of votes in Middle Tennessee that we could never have gotten. The Tennessean is a strong voice in Middle Tennessee. It covers all of Tennessee all the way to the Alabama border, and the same is true of the television stations in Nashville. WSM was particularly helpful to Hooker particularly in terms of one of their commentators, Floyd Kephart, who had his own particular ideological bent and did a reasonably good job of concealing it while interpreting the news in a manner that was conducive to that.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   The support of some of the Snodgrass people was logical because many of them were former Buford Ellington supporters, and he and Hooker had been enemies in the previous campaign, you may remember. So they had special reasons.

MR. SHARP:                   That and Hooker's liberalism. Buford Ellington was no liberal and certainly Stan Snodgrass was not.

DR. CRAWFORD:               What did you do to get the support of the former



Snodgrass people?

MR. SHARP: Well, we initially made reasonably quick overtures to them, suggesting that Hooker was not what they wanted. They would be best served by finding a candidate that would be more to their thinking. We did, we made the approach in terms of ideology knowing full well that passions would take care of themselves. Not only that, at this point the money started coming in.

A lot of money does not like--a lot of conservative money in Tennessee--they did not like a liberal like John J. Hooker. We raised three quarters of a million dollars in no time flat. I mean it was amazing! I don't know how much we spent. I'm sure we spent a good deal of it. We had plenty left over when the campaign was over, but it was used to cover the transition costs which were not covered by the state. And to wind down the headquarters slowly and pay those of us who were transitioning either back to school, or back to private businesses or into the government at a reasonable salary. We did quite well in terms of the campaign contributions.

Now Hooker didn't do too badly, but he just couldn't raise the money we could because at that time--I don't know if there is now--but at that time there was no limit on campaign contributions. You get someone like Jack Massey who is Hospital Corporation of America, and used to own a bit part of Kentucky Fried Chicken and has more money than he can do anything with except burn it. He hated John J. Hooker and he wanted to make sure that John J. Hooker didn't become governor which made him a fast and firm ally. I think he kicked in about \$25,000 the first two weeks.



DR. CRAWFORD: After the primary?

MR. SHARP: After the primary. As soon as he saw who was the winner he knew where his heart was and his money followed it. He also had an airplane that was useful from time to time. But basically, this is the type of reaction. They weren't necessarily really for Winfield Dunn mainly because nobody knew what he was besides a fresh face and a likely prospect of winning. They did know John J. Hooker and they didn't like what they saw. Hooker's association with the Kennedys was anathema in Tennessee. At least with monied interests. They certainly didn't want to see him elected. They went to great pains to see that he wasn't.

Hooker was able to get a lot of organized Democrats because they are Democrats, plus his own supporters who were quite vocal, quite effective in some cases. I remember one time during the income tax debate some of our people down in Murfreesboro (I think it was Murfreesboro) decided that Hooker 's people were going to have an anti-income tax rally. And they had an anti-income tax rally for the benefit of reporters, duly photographed and so forth. They talked how Dunn favored the income tax and what a terrible thing it was.

The Dunn supporters obviously knew that this was not true and said that we are going to come on too. We'll debate. "Nothing doing! no debates, we won't let you in." So they wouldn't let them in to the meeting. So as soon as the meeting was over--this anti-income tax rally was over--



the Republicans moved into the room to hold their own rump session.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now this was an anti-income tax rally too?

MR. SHARP: This was an anti anti-income tax rally.

Well they were both anti-income tax because Dunn was not for it. This muddled the water to the extent of making everything totally confused. At any rate they got into room and the people who had been in there first shut the doors behind them and chained them shut--locked them in. Well, they stayed for awhile until someone finally came and rescued them, but it made a good story.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who did you get to help organize the Snodgrass supporters for Winfield Dunn?

MR. SHARP: Democratic help, Alf Adams, John Spivey, (I'm trying to think) I think it was Snodgrass's campaign manager. Basically, people who were close to Snodgrass when he was Lt. Governor and had all the state legislators. It was a pretty effective group, I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: There was a major change in management to which you referred, that which took the leadership of the campaign from Memphis to Nashville and from the group of people who managed in the primary to those who managed in the general election. What was Winfield Dunn's position about this change?

MR. SHARP: Well, he really didn't express a position, at least not too clearly. He sort of sat



back and watched it happen. He knew he needed people to flesh out his campaign and he knew he needed a state-wide organization. He knew he needed a wealth of talent from various parts of the state. It couldn't be run from Memphis. But if he had any failing anywhere it was in not protecting people that he had with him before. You can't expect to have the same kind of access to the candidate that you have always had when you get into big situations. Whereas before they could go right in and be in the strategy sessions, be right into the heart of the action. And it is quite an ego-building experience.

But that has to be tapered off and that has to be ended. It isn't workable. But there were places in the campaign that these people could have played reasonably high sounding roles--and really not directly involved--and the art of diplomacy failed there and they were simply chopped off in most respects. That cost him a little bit. I don't know how much it cost him. It cost him organizationally, particularly in West Tennessee where he had people who were really working for him, but they had built up contacts with other people. Suddenly, telephone calls are coming from entirely new people and that does not do well in an organization which held together by telephone lines. So that was an organizational disincentive. The difficulty there is that you need to keep enough people on--the people who had been on before could have handled those people and introduced them in a round robin type of thing where you are



working one old and one new. There are various methods of getting over this but they were not used. It was kind of cold turkey.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you see a weakness of the continuity there?

MR. SHARP: Definitely. Winfield was really kind of assessing the situation at that point and not acting.

He was kind of seeing what could he get from Howard Baker; was there anything else available? just how much was he going to have to give up?

Clearly, he knew he was giving something up, but he didn't know quite what and not to what extent.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, he had never run a state-wide political campaign and Howard Baker had and at that time (he was ) the only Republican in Tennessee who had done so and who was available.

MR. SHARP: Right. I think there is a great deal of wisdom involved in that. I think he had already tapped that organization to some degree. He had Harry Wellford who was an intimate of Baker's----a West Tennessean but certainly a long time associate and a member of the inner Baker circle. They were there! Dan Kuykendall (was) not directly in Baker's circle but he certainly wasn't in Brock's. Of course, Dan had his own little circle. He was going to run for the Senate himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had developed his own constituency, of course, in his campaign for the Senate.



MR. SHARP: Yes, in fact, that constituency ultimately became Winfield Dunn's primary organization.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did it take for that to happen?

MR. SHARP: Well, Dan had kept all the contacts and he had little books and Guy Stone took care of a lot of those things and Dan's partner paid attention to these things. Ultimately, what happened was that six years later he was in a position which started in '64 and was in a position and his people were still in the counties, and they were still loyal to him. He had always kept up with them. Along came Winfield and Dan turned over the list. Dan is the one who went out and sounded these people out in upper East Tennessee, Morristown, and Hamblen and that kind of area. That's where he had his people. That's where these people came—not the real lightweights--those are the ones that you pick up in counties where you don't have anybody else--but these were people who had some savvy and had been involved with Kuykendall before. They were the mainstays--this is where we showed up the best in various counties where we had people who had been with Kuykendall at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about finances? How did they change from primary to general?

MR. SHARP: From rags to riches! The campaign was dubbed the "cinderella campaign." We went to fund raisers trying to scrape money together. Get a thousand here, get a hundred there, and it was terrible! I did not know whether I was going to be able to buy television spots the next week because they didn't have the money. I wanted to plan a media campaign right down to the



election and they kept telling me, "Gee it would be nice, to do that. Buy what you can for now and we'll hope we can raise it by next week." I couldn't do any long-range planning.

It was very difficult financially. It took a lot of explaining. We spent a lot of time in Memphis with charts and numbers. Ray Humphrey being there explaining how it was that Winfield Dunn could really win this thing. Nobody believed him! So you had Winfield, a nice guy who pulls teeth very nicely. So who would spend a thousand dollars on him losing the primary and governorship? They were just able to part just enough people from their money to get them over the top. As I say once they did that the money came rolling in. We couldn't catalog it fast enough.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know approximately the budget total in the general campaign?

MR. SHARP: It was around three quarters of a million dollars.

DR. CRAWFORD: What priorities did you set for spending that?

MR. SHARP: Well, the biggest money went to television. About 65% of the money went to television.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you put most of it in television?

MR. SHARP: Television generally by and large, is the most effective medium for reaching a maximum audience. That is due to audience concentration and peak periods of time. Television is pretty well rated out. You know how many people in what age bracket and what type and what background are watching it at a given moment. How many of those people there are and you can tar-



get from show to show--what there is with the message you want to hit. You tailor spots to fit that type of audience. You'll run one spot on one subject to fit a blue collar audience and you'll run another spot on another subject to hit another type of audience. It gets very complex, but that is how it is done.

All the time you are trying to get free air time and it is worth more than pay dirt time. I think it is. Pay dirt time gives you recognition but free air time people listen to. People do not listen to the political spots for content, they listen for general impression and awareness factor--whether or not they know you are a candidate and what you are running for.

Beyond that, if there is anybody interested in what you are standing for then they'll look for some free programing where you appear on some "Meet the Press" program or where you are on the news, etc. The key is to get yourself on the news and on those shows and in the most favorable light the most number of times. So that was basically what I was into and Griffith was basically traveling with Winfield to insure that those people traveling--those on location reporters--were taken care of for what ever they needed as they were traveling along the same thing. Trying to keep the press relations good. It was good. He was kind of like a walking press club, and they always had plenty of that. We would coordinate by phone.

DR. CRAWFORD:

And Griffith traveled with Winfield gener-



ally in the general election campaign and you managed things generally at home?

MR. SHARP: That's right. That's more my style anyway.

You can't get much done when you are traveling. You waste time and resources that you don't have. So I had my telephone which had about 18 phone lines and my typewriter and that was it. I turned the stuff out as fast as I could turn it out--press releases about so and so being new county chairman. Of course, the great thing is that you make up these quotes about what each of these people says about how wonderful Winfield Dunn is.

DR. CRAWFORD: They never deny this, I am sure?

MR. SHARP: No, no, they certainly don't. And you stress the issue that you think is the most important in your area, and it's very handy. And of course, the actualities, we had a system by which. . . I devised this system and got the telephone company to help me install it--a little switch box which went into a cassette recorder where I could call anywhere in the state on the Watts Line and get the candidate and tell him that I needed thirty seconds of something on this topic. In fact, quite often I could read him the script and have him read it back to me. So I would tape it on the cassette--thirty seconds of Winfield Dunn speaking on this--and then we would decide where he would say it. This is how an actuality works. You pick a good phrase, and then you say this is how you are going to



say this     sometime when you are speaking in Morristown at this luncheon meeting sometime in your speech or your remarks. Everything works out fine. So you go ahead and write a press release. During the primary I wrote a week in advance. I said, "Look, here is the quote I want you to say on this day at this time." So then, I would write the press release and have it already and it would go out a day in advance saying, "Hold release until such and such a time." I had AM and PM releases for the different newspapers and it would be: "Winfield Dunn said such and such in Chattanooga today speaking before this such and such a club or whatever it was." Of course, they had their quotes and everything worked out nicely, and that is a tool of my trade. That's how you get newspapers to pay attention to this stuff.

DR. CRAWFORD:                     Who made the decision to change from Ward Archer to Noble Dury?

MR. SHARP:                         The decision was made primarily by Lamar Alexander, although I think Ward kept some of the business. But Noble Dury took over most of it. I think Noble Dury was a better creative firm in terms of doing television work, particularly for political candidates.

                 Their print material was not good. I think Ward did better in mock-ups and lay-outs, like for instance the letterhead. I think the letterhead that came up ultimately was nowhere near as good as the one we came up with originally. That could be personal taste and preference, but it



did two things. It used up a third and almost a half of the page in picture. You couldn't get anything on it. You couldn't put the release on it! There wasn't room, so we wasted a lot of paper. In turn we wasted a lot of postage because a lot of stuff was too heavy. There was really no reason for that. Second, it wasn't any different. It was bigger, but not too different from any of the other campaign logos.

What they wanted to do was they wanted to have a coordinated picture. I agree in theory to that. To some extent they wanted the same picture (that) was on letterheads, on billboards, on bus cars, everything. The best thing they did was the bumper sticker. It simply was red with white and said, "Dunn". That's all it said.

DR. CRAWFORD: I remember that one.

MR. SHARP: That's the way a bumper sticker ought to be done. They did an excellent job on it.

The earlier bumper stickers had been ordered prior to my arrival and they were not too good. Although they became a status symbol of sorts.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was wrong with them?

MR. SHARP: Too complicated, too many colors, the word, "Dunn" wasn't big enough. It didn't have visual striking capability. When you are running down a highway at 60 mph you want that thing to jump right out at you and say it, "Dunn". Even if you don't know who the guy is or what he is running for, if you see enough of them you'll find out who he is. You put the words, "For Governor" and you have eaten up another inch vertically. You have a four-



inch bumper sticker and that means that "D-U-N-N" has got to be a lot smaller. Then you further complicate it by putting a "Win" on the left and you have eliminated your lateral spacing. Ultimately, what happens is you simply diminish the word "Dunn" where you can't read it. Not only that, but the colors were bad. They tended to fade--the quality of the bumper strip was not as good--a number of combination factors. Noble Dury came up with an excellent bumper strip.

DR. CRAWFORD: I've been given some of them for the archives.

I believe some of the original ones too.

MR. SHARP: I have a few of each back in my trophy case.

DR. CRAWFORD: Our time is getting short for this interview at any rate. What most important things have we not gotten to?

MR. SHARP: Well, I think probably some of the relationships between Dunn and The big focus after 1970 was where did the money come from and where did it go. I have a lot of those records, but I don't have them at the top of my head. I can't recite that kind of thing, but I do have a lot of (them). The interesting thing about the campaign would be to take the schedules I have--detailed schedules--who picked him up and what plane he flies in. By simply checking. . . This is a newspaperman's paradise or somebody like Herb Alexander who traces money.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who prepared those schedules?

MR. SHARP: Those schedules were prepared first by Carolyn Weins and then by a fellow from Knoxville, whose name I have forgotten, a big tall fellow who was an auctioneer. I



can't think of his name. At any rate, he prepared schedules. The schedules were quite detailed: what hotel, who is in what room, where, what time did he arrive, who is to meet whom, who is responsible for this, that, and everything--transportation, cars, planes and whatever.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   How did you handle the advance work?

MR. SHARP:                    Advance work was pretty much non-existent.

I initially obtained through some friends of mine in the White House in 1968 an advance manual from the Nixon people which is probably the best ever. As a matter of fact for four or five years, the word was that you don't even admit that there was such a thing. Totally embargoed, of course, now in the wake of Watergate everybody knows that they had advance men. Not only did they have advance men, but they had an incredible manual listing everything possible that you could think of.

One of my White House friends sent me one of them and I used it to put together a small manual for benefit of Rufus, who at that point was driving. He tried to use it wherever possible where it was applicable in state elections. I think basically it was helpful. We never had the personnel, nor the money nor the time to really do a proper advance.

The only time that we really, really advanced anything was the campaign kickoff in Knoxville which was for the general election. That was very well advanced. A lot of the Baker-Knoxville people had done a good advance job on it. The balloons dropped and bands and the whole business and it came off quite well. After that, we did advance work, but it



really was not advance work in the really true sense of advance work like you see in a presidential campaign. Because really you rely more on your local organizations.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   You called the county man?

MR. SHARP:                    We called the county man and we did have regional coordinators and sort of a pyramid style. We had a state headquarters which was in Parkway Towers overlooking the capital. Then we had a regional headquarters which was for Middle Tennessee. Well, for East Tennessee there was Holiday Inn just off of the Interstate in Knoxville. We had a regional headquarters I think was in Memphis, which was not on Getwell Road. We left that and went to an old abandoned restaurant on Poplar, I believe. I can't remember the streets now.

DR. CRAWFORD:                A large east-west street?

MR. SHARP:                   Well, yes. It was a large east-west street that goes like that (gesturing) and takes a short jog and goes like that. It was right about that jog where the headquarters were---an old restaurant. Now wait a minute, it was past the restaurant. They decided they didn't want the restaurant and they moved into an old car dealership which is also on the north side of the street. But at any rate, that was the West Tennessee headquarters.

The Middle Tennessee headquarters were located in another old car dealership directly across from the Banner and the Tennessean. Which was very handy, for being a big open front area where the showroom had been, there were desks and tables. And the salesmen's offices became the re-

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gional coordinator's and you had plenty of work space back in the garage and places to park your car--free parking for your volunteers. So that worked out quite well.

We would have the regional coordinators who would be responsible for making sure that everybody in each county got what they needed in terms of material. And communication was handled in a sort of organizational breakdown in the regions that way. That worked out also quite well. Something that Baker had done before.

DR. CRAWFORD: I believe we had better terminate this and hopefully get back to it later. Thank you.











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